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GRAPHOLOGY AS APPLIED TO CHILDREN

Jacqueline Peugeot

Translated by Monique Stirling

ABSTRACT: This article by Jacqueline Peugeot represents Chapter 11 from *La Graphologie*, compiled by Pierre Fraideau, Masson, Paris, 1989. Here, she explains children's handwriting, from an historical and descriptive perspective, stressing graphomotor age, emotional maturity, social adaptation, and personalization of handwriting. Peugeot emphasizes the importance of using Professor Ajuriaguerra's Children's Scale (E Scale), composed of F (form) items and M (motoric ability) items, for evaluating graphomotor age along with classical graphological interpretations. The developmental investigations and contributions of Héléne de Gobineau and Roger Perron are also described. The last section on American handwritings is not included in *La Graphologie*. Peugeot added it for this publication.

GRAPHOLOGY AND THE HANDWRITING TEST

A descriptive study of children's handwritings has interested specialists and graphologists[1] for a long time, but the expression of their personality was neglected by what is usually called classical graphology. This is because graphomotor difficulties, inherent in the learning of handwriting, hid the possibilities of interpretation, and perhaps also because society, at the time, was more conducive to bringing up and educating children than to understanding them.

Yet Crépieux-Jamin, in a work[2] written before *A.B.C.*, proved to be a true precursor, by studying the evolution of children's handwriting. By his observation of numerous cases, he distinguished the age of graphic culture, the age of the intellectual level (for normal children[3]), and the real age. Along with this, he gave a few sketchy interpretations, but did not pursue this kind of study, thus neglecting the possibility of graphological analyses of "Unorganized" writings, to which children's handwritings belong.

In France, the graphologist Héléne de Gobineau went back to making children's handwritings a specific field for investigation, and of making handwriting a possible intelligence test, or at least a test of socio-cultural level.

With the help of a psychologist, Roger Perron, Gobineau studied the growth of handwriting from the ages 6 to 14 on the one hand, and on the other, that of adults from different socio-cultural milieus. She showed, statistically, by means of two scales, "Children" and "Autonomy," how handwriting develops, gradually leaving behind the graphomotor difficulties inherent in learning, and adjusting itself to reaching the freedom, firmness, and speed which characterize the handwritings of adults from a good socio-cultural level.[4]

The method used graphometry[5], based on numbered assessment items[6] (neutral graphic components) applied to writing. The results make a comparison with a standardized norm possible, used as a reference.

Handwriting as an intelligence test quickly had to be abandoned, particularly for children, the Autonomy scale being insufficiently sensitive for those under 15. Also, intelligence is only one of the factors in the evolution of handwriting.

Indeed, emotional maturity, or its retardation, and socio-affective adaptation in a broad sense, are as important factors as intelligence for handwriting. Also, more specific factors, general psychomotor difficulties, laterality, dyslexia, for instance, have an important influence on the evolution of writing by disturbing it, and making it difficult to perceive the intellectual level.

On the other hand, the first concept of assessing a child's graphomotor age (i.e., the age supposed to correspond to his writing) and comparing it with his real age has to be obtained. In addition, the concept of detecting, in a precise and analytical manner, where his graphomotor difficulties lie, by comparing them with the evolution of handwriting in keeping within the statistical norms, has to be evaluated.

This has been the work of a team led by Professor Ajuriaguerra, in collaboration with the psychologist Roger Perron, mentioned above. None of those who took part was a graphologist, and no attempt was made at character interpretation. Nevertheless, an important rule can be formulated: a normal graphomotor age, or an age above the norm, is a positive indication and a guarantee that the child is of a good intellectual level, or more precisely still, is well adapted to school life in general.

If there is a discrepancy between the graphomotor age and the actual age of the child, the graphologist should avoid making a judgment on the child's intellectual level[7] and should, with the help of other disciplines, ask why the writing is underdeveloped or disturbed. Consider specific difficulties, emotional immaturity, behavioral disorders or adaptation, etc.

Familiarity with this new "Children's Scale" (see Table 1: E Scale), developed by Professor Ajuriaguerra is part of the basic knowledge necessary for the graphologist who studies a child's handwriting.

But this approach is only part of the analysis. The graphologist must complete it with a global study of the handwriting, including apparent motor difficulties linked to the process of learning how to write, and others not listed (in particular, pressure, dimensions, and direction of letters, which very soon are freed from the developmental motor difficulties). He/she can make a short analysis, using the interpretations of classical graphology, making the adjustments that only a thorough knowledge of the evolution of children's writing[8] makes possible.

AN AGE SCALE FOR CHILDREN

The scale is based on children who follow normal schooling for their age (or who are only slightly behind), standardized at six month intervals for children between 6 and 11, between their first and last years of primary education. The scale is evaluated separately for girls and for boys, and for both together, making it possible to determine, with relative precision, the graphomotor age of a child and to compare it with his real age.[9]

The scale is made up of 14 F items of "childish forms and ways of putting them together" and 16 M items of "malformation due to motoric ability." These items are given a rating, i.e., a coefficient of 1, 2, or 3, since their developmental influence differs, some items imparting greater clumsiness to handwriting than others do.

The statistical decrease, item by item, has been collated in significant tables. Each item is assessed with either 0.5 if its presence is moderate, or 1 if it is conspicuous, or 0 if it is absent. This evaluation, multiplied by the coefficient of weighting the item, gives the figure corresponding to each item found. The observer can then add up the F items, the M items, and then the total of the two, called E, which gives the theoretical graphomotor age.

The separate totals of F and M are very important, both in the difference between them and in their comparison with the norm. It is telling, for instance, to note that a child may be behind with form, but better with M items, or on the contrary, that he/she has important graphomotor difficulties with M items, as these describe the great clumsiness which occurs at the start of learning. On the one hand, the M items normally decrease, or improve, much faster than the F items, that is to say, the "childish forms and way of putting them together," but on the other, M items remain abundantly present in dysgraphic children, i.e., who write very badly, with no known possible organic or intellectual reasons for it.

It seems to us important to add to this scale two children's components, established by the graphologist Hélène de Gobineau, but rejected because they were not "developmental," but which are important, for they were statistically studied, and graphologists will often find them in children's handwritings. They are:

F34: lack of margins, still affecting 70% of 11-year-olds, and which therefore should not be wrongly interpreted;

F35: twisted looped upper extensions, formerly called "puberty twisting" by graphologists; they are found at their maximum in 7-year-old boys (75%) and in 9-year-old girls (82%). One should therefore distinguish between the appearance of twisted forms in boys and girls; its negative interpretation, as a sign of some suffering, depends on its persistence beyond the age of 11, from which time they start to disappear statistically (36% at 11, in both boys and girls).

Finally, let us mention **M38, fan-like writing** (the lines are arranged in the

TABLE 1: E SCALE

Extracted from *La Graphologie,* Chapter 11, by Jacqueline Peugeot, translated from French. Referencing figures 252 through 267, also from *La Graphologie.* The figure in parentheses is the coefficient of rating.

F ITEMS

F1 Surface writing (coef. 2). General lack of firmness of the stroke, even though it may be heavy, together with, usually, a dominance of curves over straight strokes.

F2 Plump writing (coef. 1). Widening of the ovals and of the outer loop owing to clumsiness; this item can, therefore, be assessed only if F1 is present (Fig. 252).

F3 Absence of movement (coef. 2). The letters look as if put down next to one another.

F4 Large writing (coef. 2). Assess as 1 above 3.5 mm.; 0.5 between 2.5 and 3.5 mm.

F5 School-like m & n (coef. 2). School-like reproduction in arcades as well as clumsiness (Fig 253).

F6 School-like t-bars (coef. 2). Small and placed two-thirds up the stem, as well as more or less clumsily (Fig. 253).

F7 School-like p (coef. 1). School-like as well as more or less clumsy, often in two bits (fFig. 254).

F8 Letter a in two parts (coef. 3). Pen lift between the oval and the stick (Fig. 255).

F9 Letters d, g, q in two parts (and, in English copybook, p) (coef. 2). (Fig. 255).

F10 Clumsy capitals (coef. 3). Very clumsy school-like capitals.

F11 False connections (coef. 3). Visible joining of pen lifts before letters which go in the same direction (Fig. 256).

F12 Stuck on/added connections (coef. 1). Joining pen lifts before letters go in a different direction: “a,” “d,” etc. (Fig. 257).

F13 Irregular spaces between the lines (coef. 3). Irregular spacing at the beginning of lines.

F14 Badly differentiated zones (coef. 2). Letters skidding into a zone which is not theirs.

M ITEMS

M15 Long downstrokes in more than one bit (coef. 3). The downstrokes of upper and lower extensions are made in more than one bit, “p’s” and “d’s” mainly (Fig. 258).

M16 Amended letters (coef. 3). Amendments on letters or parts thereof (keeping spelling difficulties apart).

M17 Smeary aspect (coef. 3). Smeary aspect as a whole owing to bad inking of the stroke and not to ink spots.

M18 Bending of straight sticks (coef. 1). The straight sticks of unlooped upper and lower extensions are bent (elbow-like) (Fig. 259).

M19 Dented inner round letters (coef. 3). The curves of “o’s” and “a’s” have dents (Fig. 260).

M20 Poor outline of outer loops (coef. 2). The loops of upper and lower extensions are narrow, dented.

M21 Trembling (coef. 3). Small oscillations of the stroke.

M22 Unsteady writing (coef. 2). The stroke escapes control.

M23 Jerks (coef. 2). The connections and the writing as a whole progress in spurts (Fig. 261).

M24 Telescoping (coef. 2). Jerky irregular connections to the point of letters crushing into one another (Fig. 262).

M25 Broken lines (coef. 2). The line direction is broken by an angle (Fig. 263).

M26 Fluctuating lines (coef. 1). Wavy/sinuous lines (Fig. 264).

M27 Descending lines (coef. 1). To be assessed as 1 when the angle is at or above six degrees (fig. 265).

M28 Words dancing on the line (coef. 2). The base of the letters does not keep to the baseline, giving the writing, as a whole, a hopping rather than a sinuous look (Fig. 266).

M29 Irregular dimensions (coef. 3). Irregularity of dimension of words and of parts of words.

M30 Irregular direction (coef. 1). Strong variation in the slant of letters.

5

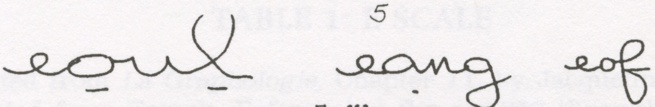


Fig. 252

F2

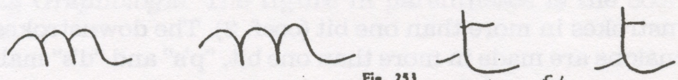


Fig. 253

F5

F6

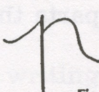
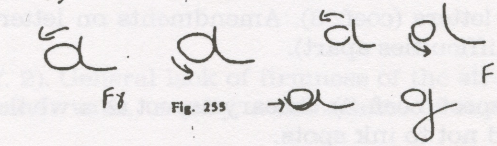


Fig. 254

F7



F8

Fig. 255

F9

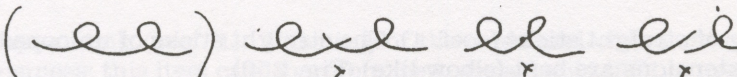


Fig. 256

F11

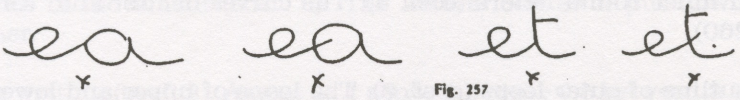


Fig. 257

F12

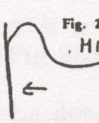


Fig. 258

M15

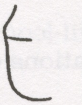


Fig. 259

M17

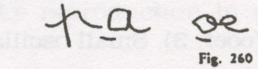


Fig. 260

M19

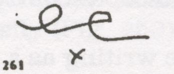


Fig. 261

M23

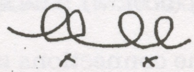


Fig. 262

M24 (M23)

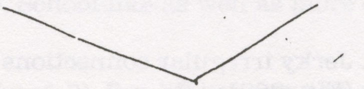


Fig. 263

M25

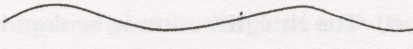


Fig. 264

M26

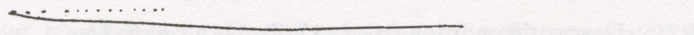


Fig. 265

M27

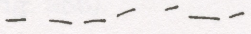


Fig. 266

M28

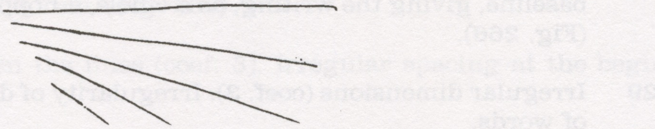


Fig. 267

Table 1: E Scale Illustrations.

shape of a fan on the page) which is found mostly in dyslexic children (Fig. 267).

Several remarks are necessary concerning the handling of this scale by the graphologist.

First, regarding the components[10] F5, F6 and F7, and the reproduction of the copybook model of "m," "n," "t" and "p," the coefficient 1 is kept for the very clumsy reproduction of the model. The coefficient 0.5 (moderate presence) is used for the reproduction of the model, without transformation, but without the typical clumsiness. These three items, in this form, remain present for a very long time in numerous adolescents' writings, thus showing the imprint of basically successful copybook model reproduction, and attachment to that model. Dysgraphic children, on the other hand, maltreat this school model, which they cannot reproduce, and replace it with forms, the evolution of which is merely on the surface, and which are a palliative measure for graphomotor difficulties.

What is more, the scale was constructed on unlined paper. Graphologists, in their practice, will often have documents on lined paper. It is desirable that they also obtain a document on unlined paper (the comparison of the two documents is revealing), but they must also allow for adjustments in the case of ruled school paper. On lined paper, certain items simply disappear, such as F13, M25 and M27, or will remain apparent only with very clumsy children, such as are visible from M26 or M27.

A child used to lined paper writes better on it than on unlined sheets; in particular, he adapts dimensions to it very quickly (F4). The graphomotor age found by the studies carried out on school ruled paper must therefore be better than that indicated by the scale. If the graphologist does not make this adjustment, there is a strong danger of imputing a normal graphomotor age to a child who does not write sufficiently well for his age.

On the other hand, the arrival of ball-point pens does not, according to experience, seem to have noticeably modified the results of the scale, although their small diameter is not conducive to good holding of the writing instrument, little supervised as this is by school teachers.

The results are given in three quartiles. To sum up, on the median, quartile 2, we give the following figures.

For boys:

- global level E goes from 55 at the age of 6 down to 16 at the age of 11;
- EF level goes from 26 down to 9;
- EM level goes from 30 down to 6.5. It comes down very rapidly at the start; it is already down to 10 by the age of 9.

For girls, whose motoric ability is always ahead of that of boys:

- global level E, from 48 down to 13;
- EF level , from 23 down to 9;
- EM level, from 23.5 down to 4.5, from the age of 6 to that of 11.

When items are described separately, as far as their statistical decrease is concerned, the presence of a group of items, which ought to have disappeared a long time ago, can alert the graphologist to the child's general evolution. One should note, for instance, the combination of amendments, false connections, with a poor quality stroke, dented ovals, and capital letters very clumsy for the age, in anxious, vulnerable children, or children who are behind in their affective maturity. These groups must always be related to a graphic context, which reinforces them or sometimes compensates for them by other aspects (clarity, proportions, regularity, etc.). This particular use of the scale is one of the interesting aspects for graphologists.

With the E Scale and classical graphology in general, we have sufficient tools with which to examine the evolution of handwriting, as well as specific, concrete cases.

EVOLUTION OF HANDWRITING

Globally, one can situate the evolution of children's handwritings in relation to the motor difficulties of developmental learning (E Scale) and non-developmental (twisted forms, etc.) in relation to characteristics which, very early, come close to adult handwritings. We will not deal with the pretended writing of 4-year-olds, nor with what children in the later stages of nursery education copy out.

Like Gobineau and Ajuriaguerra, let us take the handwriting of children in their first year at primary school ('cours préparatoire"[11]) when real learning of written language begins. The language of reading is translated and is not just spoken language, which children start to master at about the age of 3.

Learning to write is, therefore, linked to learning to read; there is simultaneity, which allows us to immediately understand the graphic difficulties which children will encounter who have difficulties in that learning process (and who, by etymology, are called dyslexics).[12]

It is not unimportant to note that the beginning of those learning processes roughly corresponds to the latency period, the rational one, according to Freud. One can guess that children who remain in the pre-latency period will have difficulties with their schoolwork and handwriting.

This learning process consists of reproducing the copybook models, curves and sticks, forming letters whose upper and lower extensions, if any, are proportionate to the body. An extension, upper or lower, equals from two to two and a half times the body of the letter, according to the model taught. (Formerly, one distinguished extensions without loops, which had to be a little shorter than the looped ones, i.e. the letters "d," "t," "p," and "q," as distinct from "f," "l," "h," "g," etc., but this distinction is tending to disappear.)

Letters have to be connected to form words, leaving about 2 mm. of space between each word. An "a" fits more or less into a square, sometimes into a rectangle with the height slightly greater. The prescribed slant is vertical or right-slanted, according to the teacher; the copybook model is never left-slanted. At the moment, verticality is the most frequently taught direction of letters. It should be noted, and this is important, that angles are not present in today's copybook models.

What does the child do, faced with these models to reproduce; what will his difficulties be?

They will be massive at the start, and will continue until a fairly late stage, which shows how right H. de Gobineau was, when she worked out her E Scale for children right up to the age of 14 years.[13] In general, it can be said that a synthesis between the movements to simply write the letters down and to progress from left to right, is rarely mastered by adolescents with the ease and rhythm managed by adults. With children, writing down the letters is easier and interests them more than does a real cursive movement, which is difficult to master. Until about the age of the 7 or 8 – the so-called "pre-copybook" phase – irregularities of dimension, direction, etc., are considerable; the writing is often dented. The movement across the page being difficult, the letters often look as if they are simply placed side by side, joined up artificially by camouflaged pen lifts (false or stuck-on connections), or on the contrary, are joined up with jerks or telescoping.

One can observe that, during this learning process aimed at mastering the school model, both the sense of proportion, even if it is not very good, and also the notion of regular spacing between the lines (the start of each line) are soon acquired. In contrast, the lack of consistency of the line remains a characteristic of children and many adolescents (fluctuating lines, steps rising and descending)[14] for a long time. Children also tend to widen their ovals and outer loops because of clumsiness (making them plump), although this is not part of the dimension of the school model. Their writing as a whole, lacking firmness, shows to anyone, even if he/she is not a graphologist, that he/she is faced with a child's writing (Surface writing).

Children write big when they start to learn to write, but very quickly they adapt to the dimensions of the school paper. Only certain very clumsy children do not manage this (and it should be noted also that, on the contrary, other children write too small, for reasons of an awkwardness of a different sort).

PERSONALIZATION OF HANDWRITING

Throughout the evolution of handwriting, classical graphological observations, alongside graphometric ones, will help graphologists in their assessment with greater depth, the more the child gets away from the early days of schooling.

Letter slant soon becomes very personal, regardless of how it was taught. One can notice in children many slightly left-slanted writings, which, before expressing opposition in a context which would reinforce this meaning, more often than not, indicate merely effort, application, or embarrassment. Pressure, although variable in children, always remains a major element for assessment too, in particular the handling of the stroke, the style of the basic movement, the proportions, and the spacing.

Graphologists will note constraint and effort in heavy, narrow, and slightly left-slanted writings, or, on the contrary, wide writings can indicate another sort of clumsiness. Vulnerability is shown in dented, often light, twisted writings with shortened or leftward-hanging lower extensions; aggressiveness in sharp points not caused by clumsiness; a certain fear of the outside world in writings which are either too compact or else too spaced out between words, and words forming timid groups. Dispersion and instability are shown in spaced-out writings with gaps, often produced with a flabby and impulsive movement; effort – not always successful effort – in basically tensed-up movements and letters which are too structured; need for appraisal in large capitals and "j's"[15] in particular; behavioral disorders in discordant, exaggerated writings. Most of classical graphology can be used, if the practitioner knows how to handle it with prudence, making the adjustments given by the E Scale in the case of some signs, the presence of which, if normal at a given age, reduces the extent of the meanings.

As in classical graphology, no sign on its own is significant, outside the graphic context in which it is incorporated.

It is very important to emphasize the statistical fact that, from the ages of 8 to 9 and 11 to 12, children manage the copybook model quite well, at least apparently, for the writing as a whole remains a little clumsy if one looks at it more closely. This successfully managed copybook model is a positive sign for a child, showing good adaptation and good level (children who are very intelligent also have this kind of writing at that age, when they are well adapted).

Beyond the age of 12, handwriting becomes personalized, with, in the case of some children, an already strongly marked identity at that period, and for others, various attempts at different writings, right up to the choice of a more stable adult writing.

In Chapter 13 of *La Graphologie*, which is devoted to adolescents, it is shown that many items specific to children persist longer, which calls for less severe judgments on the part of graphologists than if they were studying the writing of adults.

The idea of how to use the space, especially on unlined paper, remains foreign to children for a long time, as they are used to lined school paper. Any advance in this respect (layout, margins, etc.) is related to the socio-cultural milieu as well as the assumed intellectual level which goes with it, and is, therefore, a positive advance for the child.

One should note that frequently between the ages of 12 and 14 certain children suddenly adopt script forms in order to radically change their writing, to rid it of its childish aspect which they no longer like. Unconsciously, they find it too long to have to wait for the slow, natural mutations, which will personalize their writing effectively. The reader will notice that traces of typographic (printed) forms, mixed with cursive writing, are found in many an adolescent writing.

As for the signature, children write their name simply and in the middle. When they start individualizing their signature, it is generally an imitation of one they are looking at, and one should refrain from giving this the exaggerated interpretation of a desire for identification. At times, the signature indicates a desire to express their worth, or, on the contrary, indicates a difficulty, anxiety, or aggressiveness, by means of crossed-out words, illegible scribbles, complicated and sharp-pointed paraphs, etc.

A FEW GRAPHOLOGICAL STUDIES

Figure 1: a girl, 7 rears 6 months, in CE2.[16]

Surface, slightly plump writing, with little movement, large (on unlined paper), clumsy capitals, cursive movement connected with false and stuck-on connections. All this is quite normal for her age, regarding the F items (totaling 16 in the median quartile for girls), if we give 1 to the letter "p" which is missing in this document, but which we know from elsewhere to be clumsily produced in two bits.

On the other hand, the total for M items, around 17,[17] is noticeably poorer than the norm (13 in the median quartile). Note, in particular, the dented ovals, the bad outline of the outer extensions, the jerks, the irregular dimensions... and most of all, the large number of amendments: the precise observer can notice that the "a's" and "d's" are well drawn, in one try at first, but amended afterwards. The graphomotor age,

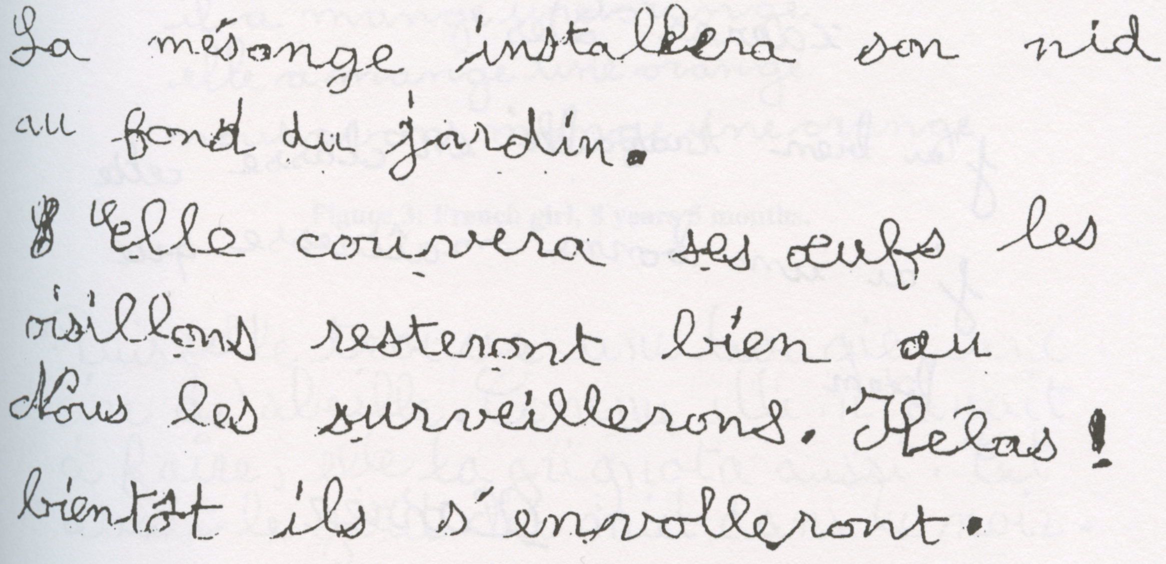

La mésange installera son nid
au fond du jardin.
Elle couvera ses œufs les
oisillons resteront bien au
Nous les surveillerons. Helas !
bientôt ils s'envoleront.

Figure 1: French girl, 7 years 6 months.

totaling 33, is a little poorer, in between the median, 30, and the third quartile, 35.[18] The child does not write well for her age but, nevertheless, manages to remain within acceptable norms. The information is in keeping with the graphomotor age: average standard, only just honorable results. The child, in other ways, is described as nice and sensitive. The curved, good-natured aspect of the writing confirms this judgment.

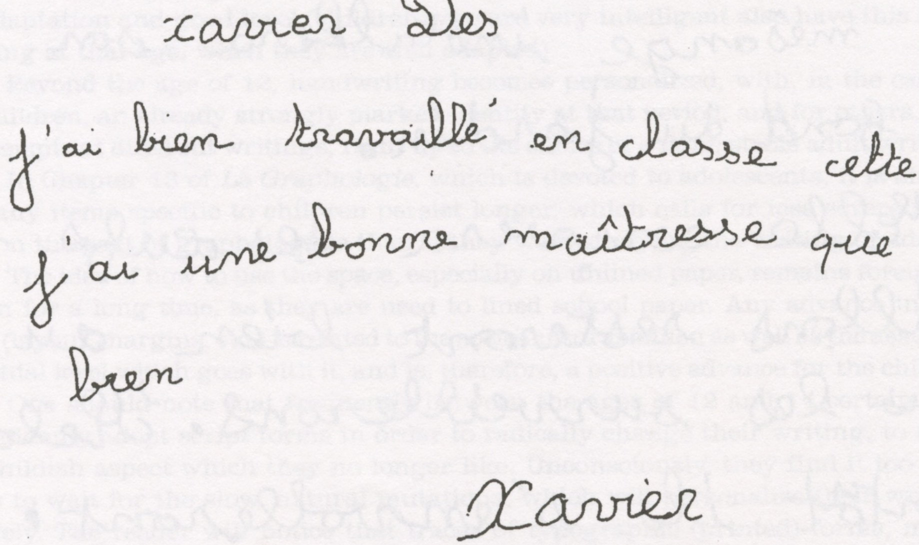
The clarity, owing to the spaces, and the legibility, are a good sign, even though the too numerous amendments, which go beyond mere clumsiness, indicate a little anxiety.

Figure 2: a boy, 8 years 4 months, at the end of the CE2.

This small, clear and precise writing is very different from the previous one. On unlined paper, it is ahead of his chronological age, due to the fact that it reproduces the copybook model well, in spite of the persistence of clumsy movements: arcades, jerks, bad outline of outer extensions. The poorly kept baseline is not very significant, as the child wrote very fast, in response to what he was requested to do.

On the other hand, the twisting affecting not only the looped upper extensions (which is normal, for 56% boys of that age have this characteristic in their writing), but also the middle zone, indicate the child's vulnerability.

He is an intelligent child who has finesse, and who is successful at school (copybook phase). A need for self-assertion (see the "j's" and the larger signature) compensates for the easily upset sensitivity.



xavier Des

j'ai bien travaillé en classe cette

j'ai une bonne maîtresse que

bien

Xavier

Figure 2: French boy, 8 years 4 months.

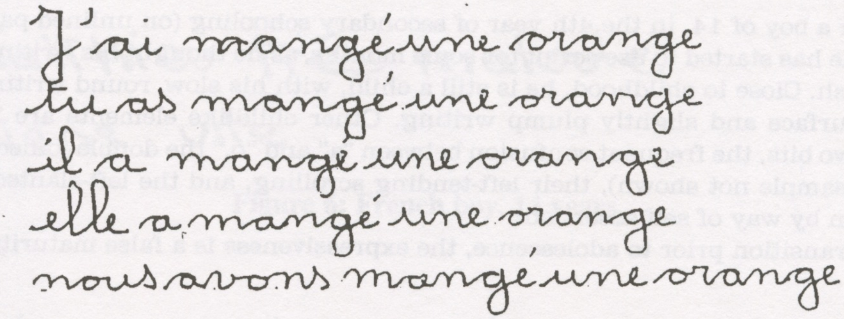
Figure 3: a girl, 8 years 5 months, top of her class, in CE2 also.

Small, careful writing reproduces the copybook model well. She is ahead in her graphomotor age. She works hard.

Figure 4: the same girl, 9 years, on unlined paper.

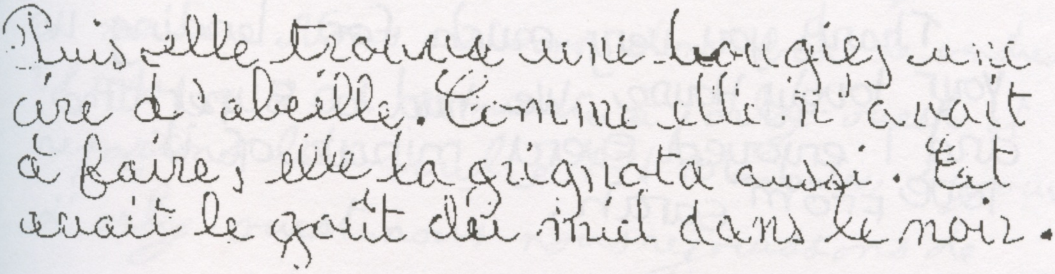
The unlined paper brings out the surface and plump aspect (see the lower extensions) of the writing, the compactness (also present in the previous sample), and the fact that smallness in handwriting is an adaptation to the discipline of the space between the lines. This adaptation is wanted, but also possible from the point of view of motoric ability, as was mentioned earlier for children generally, as far as item F4 (large writing) is concerned.

The false connections and the rather unsuccessful stuck-on connections can easily be seen on this document, but also are side by side with more supple and curved contact with the baseline. In this positive evolution, which is not helped by the unlined paper, one should notice that the ungraceful connections of coming and going before the round letters "a," "d," "g," "q," "c," and "o" have been abandoned.



J'ai mangé une orange
tu as mangé une orange
il a mangé une orange
elle a mangé une orange
nous avons mangé une orange

Figure 3: French girl, 8 years 5 months.



Puis elle trouve une bougie, une
cire d'abeille. Comme elle n'avait
à faire, elle la grignota aussi. Et
avait le goût du miel dans le noir.

Figure 4: Same girl as Figure 3, 9 years.

A clear writing, despite the tangling lines, the white is incorporated in the letters and little is left outside the words.

A personality which asserted itself in a child who was judged very difficult in her early childhood, it was channeled, it would seem, into schoolwork, by a positive rationalization, but leaving room for a considerable need to play a rather "devouring" role.

Figure 5: a young English girl of 9.

This writing shows that, whatever the basic copybook model may be, the evolution and the motor difficulties of learning are the same.

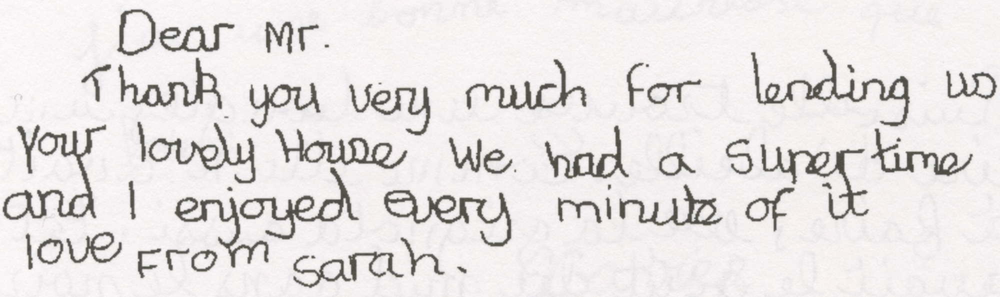
In this sample, the child reproduces the taught script model quite well, as is normal for a well-adapted child of her age. One can see the large writing on unlined paper, the slight overall clumsiness, the general lack of firmness of the writing with its heavy but slightly trembling stroke (tensed-up movement). They go together with the narrow forms, the letters that stick to one another, the unlooped upper extensions strongly bending leftwards, and the slightly descending lines.

Note the precise i- and j-dots. She is a careful child, who seeks to do well, but is tense and slightly anxious.

Figure 6: a boy of 14, in the 4th year of secondary schooling (on unlined paper).

He has started to use script for some months, as he thought his writing looked too babyish. Close to childhood, he is still a child, with his slow, round writing, thick stroke, surface and slightly plump writing. Other childlike elements are "a's" and "d's" in two bits, the frequent confusion between "a" and "o," the double-joined "p's" (in a larger sample not shown), their left-tending scrolling, and the left-slanted "j's," in opposition by way of self-assertion.

Transition prior to adolescence, the expressiveness is a false maturity.



Dear Mr.
Thank you very much for lending us
your lovely House We had a Super time
and I enjoyed every minute of it
love From sarah.

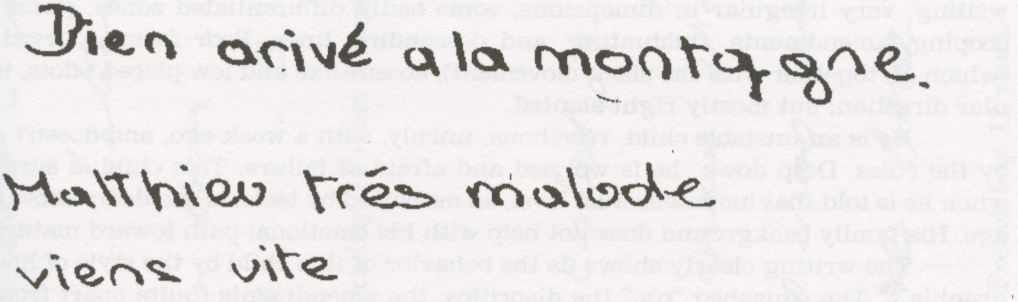
Figure 5: English girl, 9 years.

Figure 7: a boy of 14, in the 4th year of secondary schooling.

One is struck by the persistence of childish developmental components: false connections, amendments, irregular dimensions, clumsy capitals, and descending lines, side by side with evolved forms (a, n), with good interlinear spacing for the format (a postcard). Notice also the big, lower extensions, looped and hanging toward the left. A very intelligent child, hypersensitive, who has not found all the effective help he needed for asserting himself.

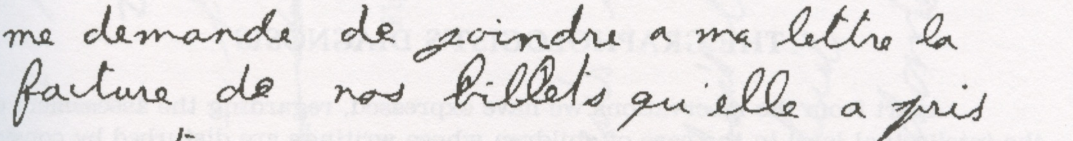
He has difficulties of identification and a slight tendency to depression. There are spelling problems.

He managed to pull through eventually, thanks to his intelligence and his motivation, helped some years later by some graphotherapy.



Dien arivé ala montagne.
Malthieu trés malode
viens vite

Figure 6: French boy, 14 years.



me demande de zoindre a ma lettre la
facture de nos billets qu'elle a pris
ce matin. Nous arrivons donc bien le vendredi
28 mars a 20 h 15 minutes à orly-ouest et
repartons le 5 avril a 17 h 10 minutes, toujours
d'orly ouest nous nous rejoussons de

Figure 7: French boy, 14 years.

Figure 8: a boy, 14 years 6 months, end of the 5th year of secondary schooling (on unlined paper).

He is a left-hander who was not interfered with. It is a writing that is slightly clumsy in its cursive progression, but really personalized (post-copybook phase). Rapid, thrown writing, irregularly small, slightly prolonged, with a precise stroke and simplified figures. One can notice the important-looking capitals, the big, stiff, initial letter, and the angular and whip-lashed "t" of "mort."

A very intelligent child, successful at school, with good contacts, but also a boy who feels the need to impose his ideas. There is underlying aggressiveness.

Figure 9: a boy, 12, in the 1st year of secondary schooling (on unlined paper), bad speller and dysgraphic.

The basic movement is both slack and impulsive, with clumsy angles. Large writing, very irregular in dimensions, some badly differentiated zones, jerks, telescoping, amendments, fluctuating, and descending lines. Poor forms, curved "j's" (which go together with the slack movement), accent-like and low-placed i-dots, irregular direction, but mostly right-slanted.

He is an unstable child, rebellious, unruly, with a weak ego, and doesn't abide by the rules. Deep down, he is worried and afraid of failure. This child is surprised when he is told that his intellectual level, as measured by tests, is decidedly above average. His family background does not help with his emotional path toward maturity.

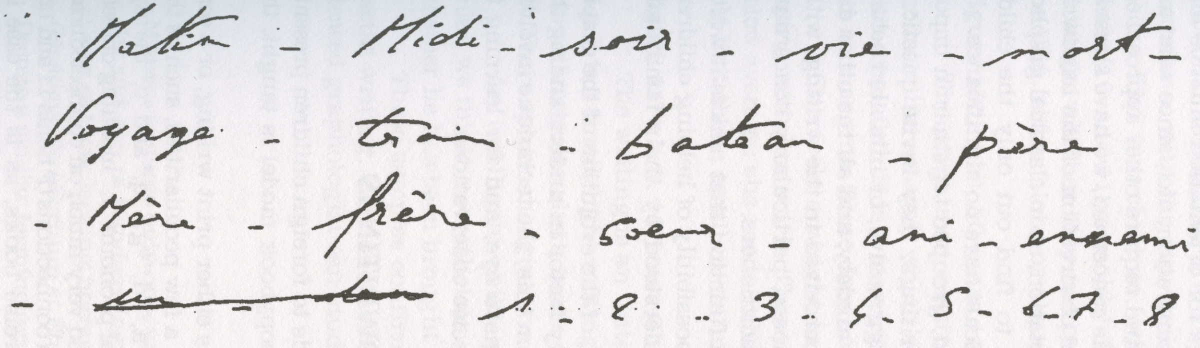
The writing clearly shows us the behavior of this child by the style of his dysgraphia.[19] The squashed "o's," the diacritics, the amendments (quite apart from the spelling), indicate profound disquiet, emotional difficulties for which his behavior is by way of compensation, and which, at the moment, is not far short of delinquency.

THE GRAPHOLOGIST'S DIAGNOSIS

Apart from the reservations we have expressed, regarding the assessment of the intellectual level in the case of children whose writings are disturbed by considerable specific or emotional difficulties, children's graphology is not more difficult than adults' graphology. And it has the merit of requiring rigorous observation, which provides a factor of security for the practitioner.

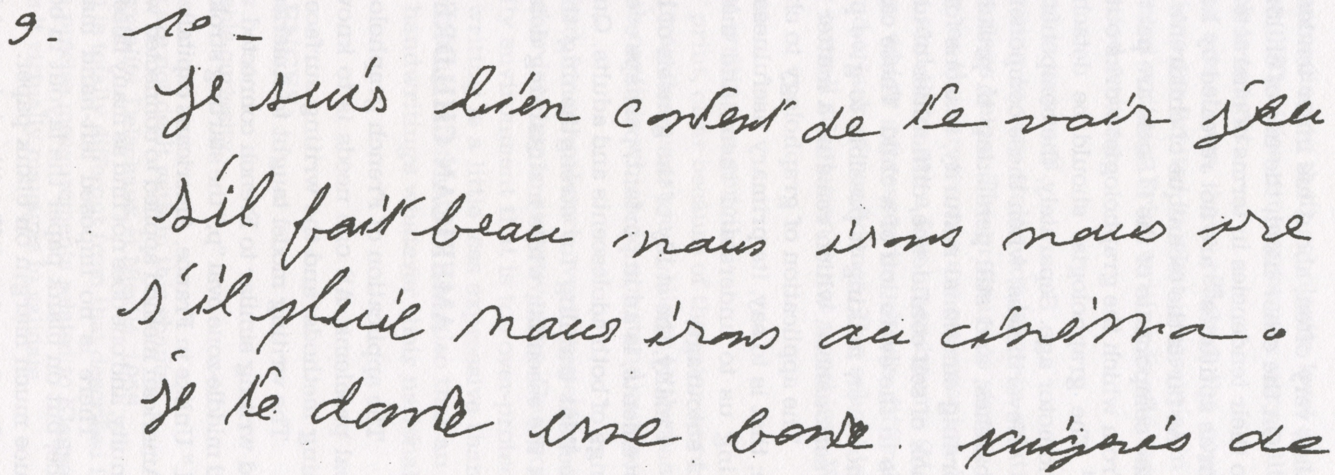
The diagnosis, a more restricted one than a graphological analysis, must take into account that the writing is in a state of mutation; it is valid for the time when the writing was produced, and the prognosis must remain cautious.

An appreciation of the child's personality, in spite of brevity, can shed an interesting light on a group diagnosis, linked to medical consultants, or, more simply still, to the advice of the family and school entourage. It does indeed give information about how the child adapts, how he copes with his affective relationships, how he behaves,



Matin – Midi – soir – vie – mort –
Voyage – train – bateau – père
– Mère – frère – sœur – ami – ennemi
– ~~un – deux~~ 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8

Figure 8: French boy, 14 years 6 months.



9 – 10 –
Je suis bien content de te voir jeu
S'il fait beau nous irons nous pro
s'il pleut nous irons au cinéma.
Je te donne une bonne poignée de

Figure 9: French boy, 12 years.

and also, very often, about his inner tendencies.

On the other hand, the use of children's writings for orientation must be limited to their tendencies in terms of character, work, concentration, etc., since what are known as aptitudes[20] are not revealed by handwriting, and require other approaches.

As far as the technique of children's graphology is concerned, we have stressed that the components of the E Scale are part of the global observation of the handwriting, from which the graphologist works out his interpretation, as in classical graphology.[21] The graphologist should be detached from it, to find out only the child's graphomotor age. Separately, the components of the E Scale have no significance.

Nevertheless, when these components are found, grouped together in important batches, and still persisting in preadolescents' writings, they invite questions concerning emotional maturity, reasons for unstable, aggressive, or inhibited behavior, lack of self-confidence, difficulties of identification, anxiety, and all the other disorders in the evolution of a child. These can easily be perceived in the writing, without, however, making it possible to give precise diagnoses, particularly concerning their seriousness, which remains a matter for other practitioners.

The application of graphology to children has a function that makes it worth while; that is to say, its primary usefulness is still the possibility of helping children, enabling us to understand them, and make them understood by their family and school entourage.

Finally, the study of the genesis of handwriting, of the evolution of the graphic movements, is an important, perhaps even a necessary factor in understanding the writings of both adolescents and adults. Quite apart from this, the technique involved is excellent training for strengthening the graphologist's eye, and for learning to detect the essential, while maintaining detailed and precise observation.

AMERICAN CHILDREN'S HANDWRITINGS

The application of French graphological methods to foreign children presents no real problems. All one needs is to know is which copybook model is taught, the teaching methods, and the writing surface.

The writing model taught to American children is either print writing, or a connected writing similar to French connected writing, with a few peculiarities, such as the closed middle-zone oval "p," the starting stroke in front of "a," "d," "g," "q," and "c," the capital "I." Unlike in France, Americans capitalize the personal pronoun "I," meaning oneself. The American method applied to connected writing is based very much on connectedness, continuity, and one does not find as many false and stuck-on connections (F items 11 and 12).

There is no imposed left-hand margin in exercise books, as is the case in France, but on blank paper the layout in both countries is fairly free; children do not produce much margin on blank paper.

Graphomotor difficulties inherent in learning exist for all children, whatever their country, and with different results according to their scholastic level and their emotional adaptation, but the graphomotor difficulties can sometimes vary a little in accordance with the copybook model which is taught.

The two children, whose writings are shown, have reached the copybook phase (10- and 11-year-olds). The explanations are limited to what is essential in these writings, whether they use print or connected writing. Print writing is often used in the USA, either alone or along with connected writing.

Figure 10: a girl, 10 years 10 months. Text is in pencil.

The print is successful, but the writing is very static, too large in relation to the interline spacing which sometimes overlaps below. The pressure is strong and a little displaced. It is a manuscript printing, as the three zones are represented. There are no margins. Some dots are very heavy, and there are a few amendments (M16).

One feels a weight in this writing, which expresses the child's difficulty in coping with her work. There is anxiety and a lack of confidence. Her school level is below average; she needs to be helped. Her overall adaptation is not a problem. We are told that she is small in stature and shy.

Figure 11: a boy, 11 years 3 months. Print writing in pencil.

The writing is an "intellectualized" print, clear because of the inter-word spacing. It is a small, light writing, with some irregular pressure. It clings to the baseline, has an irregular slant, tends to be low, with capitals which do not stand out much at all. There are no margins, no signature.

An intelligent child, sensitive, gifted for schoolwork, very respectful of the rules; we think, nevertheless, that he is rather lacking in assertiveness. One wonders whether he has been brought up in a family environment that is too over-protective.

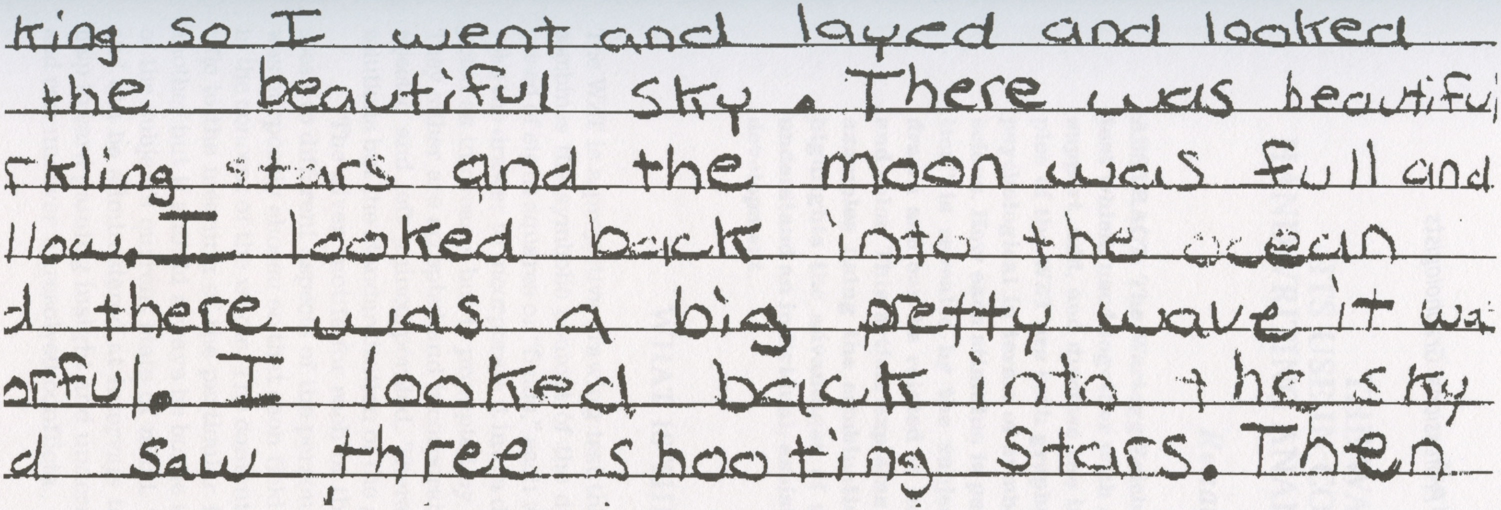
These samples confirm that print writing is a little less expressive than connected writing, but nonetheless gives interesting information, and also that an experienced graphologist can study children's handwritings whatever their nationality.

REFERENCES:

1. Michon, to quote only one, with his insatiable curiosity.
2. *Sex and Age in Handwriting*, 1924.
3. Cases of those lacking normal intelligence are not dealt with in this chapter.
4. *Génétique de l'Écriture et Étude de la Personalité,* Delachaux et Niestlé, 1958.
5. Despite a similar terminology, this method is totally different from that described in Jacqueline Peugeot's book, and is based on precise measurements related to Klages's graphological types, whose interpretations it virtually manages to validate.
6. See further on.

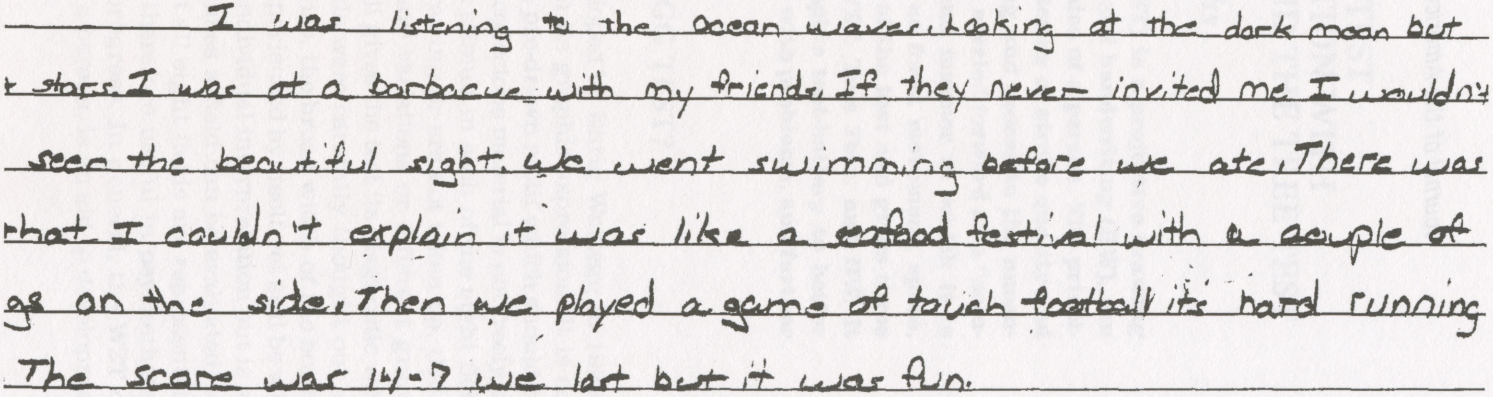
7. Tests exist to deal with this question. See *La Vraie Vie des Tests* in the same series, M.A. Publications.
8. *La Connaissance de l'Enfant par l'Écriture*, Jacqueline Peugeot, Privet.
9. Readers can find the established scale, as well as the description of the items and the statistical tables, in *l'Écriture de l'Enfant*, by Ajuriaguerra and his colleagues, Book 1, Delachaux et Niestlé.
10. We use the terms items or components to mean the same thing.
11. When children are 6 years old, in France (T.N.).
12. Specific difficulty in learning to read, without organic or intellectual reasons for it.
13. The fact that Ajuriaguerra's E Scale stops at 11 need not bother us, since one can use it for children and adolescents who are behind in graphomotor development. Or show handwriting disorders.
14. Words dancing on the line.
15. In French "je" meaning "I", the letter "I" in English should be considered in the same way.
16. The third year of primary schooling in the French system.
17. The numbered assessment remains approximate in this graphometry, in which the choice between moderately present (0.5) and conspicuously present (1) is not always as obvious as the examiner would like it to be.
18. In the scale, the lower the number of the item, the better the graphomotor age, since the items represent the clumsiness of the writing.
19. See the chapter on graphotherapy in *La Graphologia*.
20. For Mathematics, English, etc.
21. That is, from the expressiveness of the graphic movements and from the symbolism of space and forms, which the reader will find explained in the other chapters of this book.

BIOGRAPHY: After her university and her graphological studies, Jacqueline Peugeot worked in several psycho-pedagogical centers, in particular, in the reknown Centre Psycho-pédagogique Claude Bernard, where she worked for 30 years. She created a method for examining children's handwriting, as well as a method of grapho-therapy for children and adolescents, and has conducted research throughout her professional life. For many years, she was the Président of the Société Francaise de Graphologie and now has become Présidente d'Honneur of it, and is still the Director of the journal *La Graphologie*. She is the author of *La Connaissance de l'Enfant par l'Ecriture* (Getting to Know Children from Their Handwriting) and the co-author of *Manual of Graphology*. She has been awarded Chevalierdans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques, for her services to "L'Education Nationale."



king so I went and layed and looked
the beautiful sky. There was beautifu
rkling stars and the moon was full and
llow. I looked back into the ocean
d there was a big pretty wave it wa
orful. I looked back into the sky
d saw three shooting stars. Then

Figure 10: American girl, 10 years 10 months.



I was listening to the ocean waves, Looking at the dark moon but
t stars. I was at a barbacue with my friends. If they never invited me I wouldn't
seen the beautiful sight. We went swimming before we ate. There was
hat I couldn't explain it was like a seafood festival with a couple of
gs on the side. Then we played a game of touch football it's hard running
The score was 14-7 we lost but it was fun.

Figure 11: American boy, 11 years 3 months.